

18. A Year in Review: PINEMAP's Landowner Outreach Activities

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Using a variety of methods and information delivery technologies, PINEMAP is gathering the latest research-based knowledge and disseminating it to silviculturists, natural resource managers, and landowners. Through these efforts, PINEMAP will enhance capacity for regional, interdisciplinary collaboration among climate and forest scientists and Extension and education professionals and enhance connections between corporate and noncorporate forest landowners and forestry and climate researchers and education and outreach professionals. These connections will foster an engaged and literate public with the capacity to make informed, practical decisions related to climate, forest ecosystems, and forest management.

PINEMAP is dedicated to linking research findings to outreach and education opportunities. The success of the project will ultimately be measured by the impact PINEMAP tools and research have “on the ground” toward improving the health and resilience of southeastern pine forests, as well as educating landowners and foresters about the impact of climate change, increasing carbon sequestration, and advancing the skill set of natural resource professionals. PINEMAP is delivering cutting-edge knowledge pertaining to forest health and resilience, sustainability, and productivity through Extension programming. To achieve these goals, PINEMAP’s Extension team is using state-of-the-art information delivery systems to engage a greater number of forest resource practitioners and landowners and to impact a more diverse range of individuals and groups than might have been reached with more traditional Extension programs. In the last year, PINEMAP has implemented a variety of events. This article summarizes some notable examples of our efforts.

Western Gulf Silvicultural Technology Exchange

The Western Gulf Silvicultural Technology Exchange is a biennial workshop focused on disseminating new knowledge, tools, and strategies about pine plantation silviculture to industrial and large-scale silviculturists working primarily in the Western Gulf region of the United States. This event is an important opportunity for Western Gulf region foresters and forest landowners to learn about the unique climate conditions of the region and the effects of climate and climate variability on southern forests. PINEMAP is sensitive to the greater urgency of adaptive silvicultural strategies in the Western Gulf region and has established a multi-institutional committee, consisting of not only PINEMAP members, but also, non-PINEMAP funded universities and agencies in the Western Gulf, including the Louisiana State University AgCenter, Stephen F. Austin College of Forestry, and Louisiana Tech School of Forestry. To date, PINEMAP information disseminated through the Western Gulf Silvicultural Technology Exchange has reached 72 silviculturists, representing 9 million acres, 5 million of those in pine.

Professional Development Webinar Series

The Professional Development Webinar Series is an ongoing, monthly series of webinars started up in November 2012 using the Forestry Webinars portal (www.forestrywebinars.net). This effort primarily targets large-scale forest managers and natural resource professionals such as forestry consultants and state forestry agency personnel. The series packages and delivers new knowledge and tools developed by PINEMAP in such a way that the audience can confidently incorporate these into their daily business and, as a result, improve the resilience, productivity, carbon sequestration, and nutrient management of their forest lands. Combined survey results show that participants feel satisfied with the amount of information covered in the webinars (Figure 18.1). To date, there have been two parts in the series: the first session of three webinars focused on soils and soil management and the second part was a single session focused on climate change in the Southeast that also covered myths and misconceptions surrounding the topic. So far, there have been a total of 315 viewers.



Participants at the PINEMAP Climate Change Workshop series for 1890 Land Grant universities event, January 21–23, 2014, tour a pine plantation agroforestry system near Wilmington, North Carolina. Photo by Leslie Boby.

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Adaptive Silvicultural Training: State Forestry Agency Training

PINEMAP is driving efforts in adaptive silvicultural training for state agency foresters. The key goal is to inform foresters of the latest research and tools so they can transfer information to their clients (primarily small-scale family forest landowners) and positively impact forest health, resilience, and productivity. To date, the program has been tested with the Texas A&M Forest Service. Sixteen foresters participated in the initial training program and have already incorporated the new strategies into their forest management plans and used new decision-support tools to guide landowners. Plans are in place to conduct four trainings of this type across the region in 2014.

PINEMAP Climate Change Workshop Series for 1890 Land Grant Universities

The PINEMAP Climate Change Workshop Series for 1890 Land Grant universities is a strategic effort to train educators from various agencies in forestry and natural resource-based climate change mitigation and adaptation solutions. The first event was held at the Alabama A&M University Agricultural Research Center in Huntsville, Alabama in May 2013. Thirty registered participants attended this workshop. An additional event was held in Wilmington, North Carolina in January 2014. About twenty-five participants attended this workshop, including members of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, as well as forestry outreach agents from the Southern Federation of Forest Cooperatives (Figure 18.2). Targeted toward the 1890 Land Grant University faculty, as well as specialists in research, Extension, and education, the event featured discussion panels that examined a variety of forestry strategies to educate the general public on various aspects of climate change and forest responses to changing conditions.

Whether hosting professional development webinars or conducting traditional face-to-face workshops via county Extension agents, the PINEMAP Extension team focuses on delivering the most relevant and timely information to our audience, while collaborating with PINEMAP researchers and specialists to glean up-to-the-minute research findings, information, and tools generated by the project. We are using evaluation results to improve and expand our programming over the next two years.

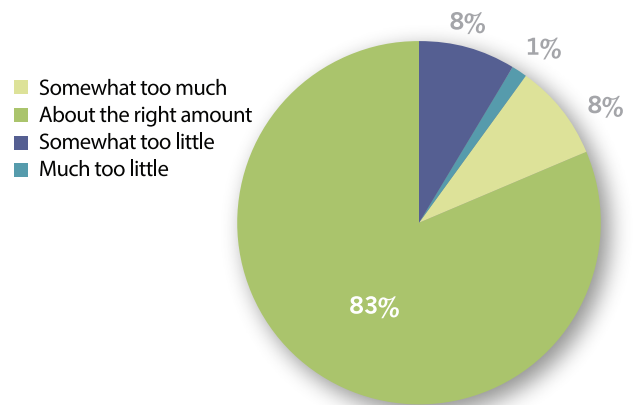


Figure 18.1. Combined survey results from the PINEMAP Professional Development Webinar Series, showing an overall satisfactory opinion regarding the amount of information covered during the webinars.



Figure 18.2. Participants at the PINEMAP Climate Change Workshop series for 1890 Land Grant universities event, January 21–23, 2014 in Wilmington, North Carolina.